

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Amend paragraph [002] as follows:

Q1 [002] A self-storage facility is a term generally applied to businesses that offer storage space for rent, usually on a month to month or other limited time period. Typically, a self-storage facility includes a number of individual storage spaces or cubicles that may be separated from each other by common walls and have separate entrances. The storage spaces are generally rented to individual customers or business entities for the purpose of storing personal property. For example, a home owner changing homes may wish to temporarily store personal items, such as a t.v., sofa, and other household items, in a storage facility before moving into a new home. Customers may also use a self-storage facility to store accumulated possessions over an extended period of time. In essence, self-storage facilities provide the extra storage space that customers require over and ~~about~~ above the storage capacity of their primary living facility.

Amend paragraph [005] as follows:

A2 [005] Accordingly, a need exists for an improved self-storage rental system and method ~~for operating of operation~~ that is less labor intensive and particularly adapted for use by persons lacking an aptitude for or interest in technical knowledge and skills ordinarily associated with computerized and/or automatic systems, thus ~~results~~ resulting in improved efficiency and reduced costs of operation.

Amend paragraph [006] as follows:

A3 [006] In accordance with ~~one~~ a preferred embodiment of the invention, a method and system for facilitating rental of self-storage units are provided that is responsive to a customer entering a service area to automatically establish ~~telephonic~~ communication between a ~~prospective on-site~~ the customer and a remote manager or coordinator using a communication

link, such as a telephone, Internet, radio, cellular, facsimile, satellite, email, web or video connection. The system allows the ~~on-site customer~~ remote manager to obtain information from the customer relating to the customer's storage needs, and to then recommend inspect one or more available storage units, ~~recommended by~~ ~~t~~The remote manager and, can control passage of the customer through a gate to enable inspection of the recommended storage units while observing the customer through selectively positioned cameras/monitors. The service area includes a counter on which a rental agreement can be placed under the direction of the remote manager for completion by the customer if a self-storage unit is found acceptable, ~~enter into a rental agreement for the storage unit with the assistance of~~ The counter also receives personal identifying and credit information from the customer. Strategically placed cameras enable the remote manager ~~who can verify~~ to review information placed on the rental agreement by the customer to verify that the rental agreement is fully and legibly completed, ~~review~~ to review and compare the identifying and credit documents presented by the customer with visual observation of the customer, and to ~~verify payment (by check or credit card)~~ and confirm deposit of the completed rental agreement and payment in a deposit slot for later retrieving. The customer service area preferably contains a cabinet having accessories therein, such as a lock for securing the rented self-storage unit, that is controlled and observed by the remote manager for access by the customer if wishing to purchase a lock. The manager can observe and verify the customer's payment when placed on the counter. In an ~~illustrative~~ illustrated embodiment, communication between the prospective customer and remote manager or coordinator is established via a public switch telephone (PSTN) and performed by telephone conversation. Thus, the system does not require any knowledge or skill related to computer use or other new technology on the part of the

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prospective customer. A feature of the invention is that the customer service area allows control
of access to system usage.

Amend paragraph [0024] as follows:

Q4 [0024] The customer service area 22 includes hardware and software necessary for facilitating self-storage rentals, such as customer detection hardware, audio visual equipment, and a specially designed customer service countertop 44 located within the customer service area. FIG. 3 schematically depicts a customer detection circuit for recognizing when a customer 14 enters the customer service area 22. When a prospective customer arrives at the customer service area 22 and opens a door, indicated at 62 in FIG. 4, to enter the service area, a switch 46 in the customer detection circuit is activated, i.e. closed, to automatically initiate dialing a telephone number to connect with the remote manager 18. The appropriate telephone number is dialed by a modem 48 of a transceiver 50 to initiate communication. Alternatively, the customer 14 may contact the remote manager 18 by activating a push 52a button 52a located on a speakerphone 52 at the customer service area 22. In another alternative, a prospective customer may pick up a telephone receiver located at the customer service area 22 to initiate communication with the remote manager. In the latter embodiment, picking up the telephone receiver automatically dials the manager at the remote management site 20. In another alternative, the remote manager 18 may control the customer services area door 62 by sending a signal to the transceiver 50, as is known. For example, the manager 18 may not want to allow flex hours entry to the customer service area 22 and may keep the door to the service area locked at certain times to prevent entry of a prospective customer.
